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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7889  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1767  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001053

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNAU](#) [UNMIK](#) [PGOV](#) [YI](#) [EU](#) [EZ](#)  
SUBJECT: CZECHS SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO, EU  
MEMBERSHIP FOR SERBIA

REF: A. STATE 135734  
[1](#)B. PRAGUE 0744

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The Czechs agree with the U.S. position on Kosovo and Serbia on every material point. While the Czechs support the status talks, they are pessimistic about the outcome: Serbs will never willingly agree to an independent Kosovo. Czech MFA officials plan a visit to the Balkans the week of August 28 to assess the situation. They will also meet with regional V-4 partners, plus Slovenia and Austria, to search for ways to provide support and incentives to Serbia. The Czechs support closer EU integration for Serbia, and agree that the Serbs must comply with ICTY before SAA talks can continue. However, the Czechs do not see a consensus within the EU on what constitutes ICTY compliance. The Czechs also do not believe ICTY compliance ought to be a prerequisite for Serbian-NATO cooperation. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Polec Counselor and Poloff met with MFA Director of Southeast and Eastern Europe Department Tomas Szunyog on August 23 to deliver Reftel A and discuss the resolution of status talks on Kosovo. Szunyog confirmed that the Czech position on Kosovo, which is consistent with the U.S. position, remains unchanged (see Ref B). (Note: the Czechs are currently negotiating the formation of a new national government. Szunyog assured us that Czech policy on Kosovo and the Balkans would remain unchanged no matter which party(ies) form the new government. End note.)

[1](#)3. (C) To assess the current situation in the region, Szunyog and the new MFA Director General for Territory I (Europe) Jana Houbaskova will visit Vienna, Belgrade, and possibly Podgorica and/or Pristina the week of August 28. He also described plans to increase the Czech diplomatic presence in the Balkans: (a) a one-person liaison office will be opened in Pristina in mid-September, housed in the Slovak mission; (b) a one-person Embassy will be opened in Skopje, and (3) the operation of a summer office in Podgorica may be extended through the fall, or possibly to the end of the year if funding permits.

[1](#)4. (C) Szunyog described current EU efforts to provide incentives to Serbia to cooperate fully in the status talks. With respect to the EU perspective, the Czechs hope SAA negotiations will begin anew in the fall, but agree that ICTY compliance is required first. (However, the Czechs are somewhat flexible of what constitutes compliance, and would likely accept DiCarlo's certification of compliance even if the Serbs fail to turn Mladic over to the Hague.) In the meantime, to keep the prospect of future EU and NATO membership alive in the minds of the Serb leadership, Szunyog

suggested involving them in as many EU-related "bureaucratic meetings" as possible, and possibly granting them NATO observer status. The Czechs believe that cooperation with NATO should be less dependent on ICTY compliance than EU integration.

¶5. (C) In addition to EU efforts, the Czechs are working on a regional basis with their V-4 partners (Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary), together with Slovenia and Austria, to explore ways to support Serbia. Szunyog said the group, led by Austria, plans to present a paper in mid-September. Nevertheless, Szunyog was pessimistic about the impact of incentives on the Serbs. At best, he thought the prospect of EU membership or other incentives might persuade the Serbs not to fight an outcome that grants independence to Kosovo. But no incentive will induce the Serbs to willingly agree to that outcome.

¶6. (C) Comment. The Czechs remain reliable allies on issues relating to Kosovo and the Balkans, and, unlike some EU member states, are strong advocates for Serbian-EU integration. End comment.  
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